

# 2010-2011 AmeriCorps\*State Application

Application Deadline:  
November 9, 2009



The Vermont Commission on National and Community Service  
Agency of Human Service, Office of the Secretary  
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The Vermont Commission on National and Community Service  
*Improving Vermonters' Lives Through Voluntary Service*

## **2010-2011 AmeriCorps\*State Application Preface:**

The Vermont Commission on National and Community Service (VT CNCS) partners with the Corporation for National and Community Service (Corporation) to make funding available for AmeriCorps\*State programs in Vermont. Any applicant applying for an AmeriCorps program that will operate only in the State of Vermont must apply through VT CNCS. Grant funds are available to establish new Vermont AmeriCorps programs or to support, expand or replicate an existing program. Grant awards will cover a period of one year of operation beginning September 2010. Grants may be renewed for two additional years, subject to annual review and the availability of federal appropriations. Please review the following pages that will provide important information regarding the AmeriCorps application process.

### **AmeriCorps Overview:**

#### **AmeriCorps – A National Corps of Capable, Committed Individuals**

AmeriCorps is a network of local, state, and national service programs that connects more than 70,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet our country's critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment.

AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent federal agency created to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. The Corporation also oversees Senior Corps and Learn and Serve America. Together these programs engage more than 1.5 million Americans of all ages and background in service each year. AmeriCorps\*State and AmeriCorps\*National support a broad range of local service programs that engage thousands of Americans in intensive service to meet critical community needs.

#### **Your World - Your Chance to Make it Better**

AmeriCorps\*State and AmeriCorps\*National is the broadest network of AmeriCorps programs. It provides financial support through grants to public and nonprofit organizations that sponsor service programs around the country, including hundreds of higher education institutions, Indian tribes, faith-based and community organizations, and public agencies. These groups recruit, train and place AmeriCorps members to meet critical community needs in education, public safety, health and the environment.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of both AmeriCorps\*State and AmeriCorps\*National is to engage AmeriCorps members in direct service and capacity-building to address unmet community needs. Local programs design service activities for a team of members serving full or part-time for one year or during the summer. Sample activities include tutoring and mentoring youth, assisting crime victims, building homes, and restoring parks. AmeriCorps members also mobilize community volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the organizations where they serve. The organizations that receive grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members to serve in their programs.

### **Who Can Apply**

AmeriCorps programs provide people power. Funds provided through AmeriCorps support a team of members who provide direct service to build or improve communities and generate volunteers to support their efforts. If you have a critical education, public safety, human services or environmental need you believe can be addressed by the involvement of people serving together, then this program is for you. AmeriCorps grants cannot be used to fund or replace existing staff. AmeriCorps programs are about recruiting, placing and supporting volunteers to get things done for communities.

**AmeriCorps\*State** operates through Governor-appointed State Service Commissions in each state. The State Service Commissions accept applications from:

- State and local nonprofit organizations
- Community and faith-based organizations
- State and local education institutions
- Native Indian Tribes
- State and local governments

Programs applying to the Vermont Commission on National and Community Service will be applying for funding through the AmeriCorps State program *only*.

**AmeriCorps\*National** accepts applications from:

- National nonprofit organizations that operate in two or more states
- Consortia formed across two or more states, consisting of institutions of higher education, Indian tribes, or other nonprofits, including labor, faith-based and other community organizations.

VT CNCS does not manage any AmeriCorps\*National programs. Local organizations that belong to a national consortium or a regional/national organization that operates in two or more states should inquire with their national office on the process of applying for AmeriCorps\*National teams.

For more information, please refer to these informative websites:

**AmeriCorps in Vermont State:**

<http://vtcncs.vermont.gov/>

**Corporation on National and Community Service:**

[www.cns.gov](http://www.cns.gov)

### **Scope of Program**

Programs must be large enough to achieve a demonstrable impact on the community being served. Because of the rural nature of our state, most programs will have AmeriCorps members placed at many different sites. While the actual size of each program may vary depending on the design of the program and number of sites, applicants should apply for at least 15 full-time AmeriCorps member service years. Applicants should evaluate their present infrastructure and capacity when considering program size.

You are encouraged to partner with other organizations in your community or throughout the state to apply for AmeriCorps funding. One organization must serve as the legal applicant in order to submit an application. When partnering with other organizations, VT CNCS encourages you to seek organizations that share similar missions or focus on similar issues.

There is substantial cash and in-kind match required of the applicant. Programs may use other federal funds (as long as they are not Corporation funds) as part of their match.

Please take note of these specific aspects of 2010 AmeriCorps Guidelines and 2010 AmeriCorps\*State Application Instructions as follows:

- All programs in Vermont State that apply for funds **MUST** meet the maximum average cost per member service year (MSY) of \$13,000/member.
- The minimum living allowance is \$11,800.
- The VT CNCS has decided not to accept applications for planning grants at this time.

We strongly suggest that new applicants immediately apply for a DUNS (Data Universal Number System) number required for your grant application that is referenced in the application instructions.

Service is a strategy utilized by many communities and organizations to address priority needs. These activities can be supported locally, as well as with Corporation funding. We encourage applicants to carefully identify ways these activities can be supported with local resources should CORPORATION funding be reduced or eliminated. Applicants are requested to coordinate application efforts with other existing AmeriCorps programs, as they are creative in their program design. Reach out to new partners and be visionary in the way service can be a solution in communities in Vermont.

### **Fixed-Amount Grant Pilot for 2010**

The Serve America Act authorizes the Corporation to award fixed-amount grants in 2010. In 2010, these fixed-amount grants are available for programs that enroll full-time members only. Fixed-amount grants allow programs to apply for a fixed dollar amount per member. The fixed amount awarded per member is significantly less than the cost of running an AmeriCorps program and the applicant must raise the additional revenue necessary to operate the program. EAP programs, which have been authorized to receive fixed-amount grants for many years, may continue to enroll less-than-full-time members.

An AmeriCorps program that receives a fixed-amount grant is like any other AmeriCorps program except that, unlike the more typical cost-reimbursement grant, the fixed amount grant does not require:

- Compliance with OMB Cost Principles.
- Detailed, line-item budgets.
- Corporation FFRs.
- Match or documentation of match.

Approved applicants must agree to participate in evaluations the Corporation conducts to measure success of this pilot. The maximum costs per Member Service Year (MSY) for the full-time fixed-amount pilot are currently being determined and will be released later this fall (one MSY is the equivalent of a full-time term of service). The amount per full-time member requested will be a competitive factor in the Corporation's selection process. Priority will be given in the selection process to organizations that have demonstrated capacity to track and report on performance measures. The Corporation may also prioritize those organizations that adopt specific national performance measures or are aligned with national service priority areas.

### **Priorities for 2010-2011 Set by VT CNCS**

VT CNCS has decided that its priorities for 2010-2011 will mirror those set by the Corporation. The 5 national service priorities set by the Corporation can be found in the Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity Overview ([http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/09\\_0918\\_nofa\\_ac.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/09_0918_nofa_ac.pdf)). In general, the VT CNCS is looking for program applications with projects that will address:

- Education
- Healthy Futures
- Clean Energy/ Environment
- Veterans
- Opportunity

### **How do I apply?**

#### ***FOR NEW APPLICANTS ONLY:***

New applicants are required to submit a Concept Paper and Pre-Award Risk Assessment Questionnaire by October 23, 2009. A new applicant, for purposes of the Concept Paper and Pre-Award Risk Assessment requirement, is an applicant that does not presently receive funding through VT CNCS. Therefore, those applicants who presently receive funding through VT CNCS do not need to comply with this section. The Concept Paper should be no longer than two (2) double-spaced pages and provide the following information in narrative form:

- a. Priority area to be addressed
- b. Number of anticipated AmeriCorps members
- c. Geographic area to be served (programs can be statewide)
- d. Synopsis of proposed program
- e. Eligibility to include date of 501(c)(3) status, if applicable
- f. Proposed partners/collaborators
- g. Past grant(s) experience with sponsoring agency
- h. Most recent and type of audit of sponsoring agency
- i. Completion of VT CNCS Pre-Award Risk Assessment Questionnaire

#### ***FOR ALL APPLICANTS:***

##### **Online Application Process**

The Corporation is working with other federal agencies to simplify federal grant-making processes and provide access to federal activities over the Internet. They have developed a grants management system that includes on-line grant applications, awards and reporting. Grant applications will be done through the system that is named eGrants. All grant applications must be submitted online.

## **Application Review Process**

Applicants will submit an application for programs to start in the fall of 2010. VT CNCS has a limited amount of AmeriCorps\*State “formula” grant dollars to fund programs. VT CNCS will submit applications to the AmeriCorps\*State “competitive” round at the Corporation for National and Community Service in Washington, D.C. prior to determining which program(s) it will fund with the “formula” funds. It is anticipated that successful programs can be renewed for two additional years. In order to submit strong applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service, VT CNCS has developed a grant application process that allows adequate time for review and decision-making prior to deadlines set by the Corporation. The VT CNCS grant application review process contains the following components:

- The Concept Papers will be reviewed by the VT CNCS staff and Commission’s Program Committee. The applicants should not expect to receive feedback on their paper. However, VT CNCS will notify the applicant if the Concept Paper indicates that the proposed program will not be able to meet federal requirements or other similar areas of concern are evident.
- Once the application is submitted online, a preliminary technical review will be conducted by VT CNCS staff to ensure that all required elements are present and that the budget meets guidelines. Applicants may receive notice from VT CNCS staff that revisions are required at that point in the process.
- Applications that pass the technical review will then be read by peer reviewers. Conflict of interest forms are completed by all reviewers for each application read. If a potential conflict of interest exists, proposals are evaluated by other reviewers. Applications will be ranked and selected for inclusion in the state application package forwarded to the Corporation. Applicants may be asked to make revisions or adjustments in their application prior to it being forwarded to the Corporation.
- After the anticipated verbal notification from the Corporation (by June 30, 2010) of the grant award status of the AmeriCorps\*State Competitive programs, VT CNCS will decide which program(s) to submit into the state formula grant application process.

## **CRITERIA USED BY VT CNCS TO EVALUATE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS**

VT CNCS will conduct its grant application review based on the following criteria set by the Corporation for National and Community Service:

### **Basic Selection Criteria: Categories, Sub-Categories and Respective Weights**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Sub-Categories and Weights</u>
Program Design	50%	Rationale and Approach– 10% Member Outputs and Outcomes – 20% Community Outputs and Outcomes – 20%
Organizational Capability	25%	No sub-categories
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	25%	Cost-effectiveness – 15% Budget Adequacy – 10%

The entire AmeriCorps Application Instructions can be found online at [http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/09\\_0918\\_nofa\\_ac\\_inst.pdf](http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/09_0918_nofa_ac_inst.pdf). It may be necessary to request revisions and/or clarifications. Any such requests will be made on a timely basis. If a proposal does not include information as requested and it is not submitted in the required format, VT CNCS reserves the right to decline to read it. If an application is rejected, an appeal may be submitted in writing to Gretchen Berger-Wabuti, Executive Director of the VT CNCS office in Waterbury. The committee will respond within 10 days.

### **2010 AmeriCorps\*State Application Calendar**

October 23, 2009	Concept paper and Risk Assessments Due to VT CNCS (For NEW applicants ONLY)
November 9, 2009	Completed Applications Due to VT CNCS for ALL applicants; Applications must be received in the VT CNCS office on or before November 3, 2008
Week of December 15, 2009	Grant Review Meeting
June, 2010	All applicants will be notified of status

## VERMONT NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Below is an excerpt of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) from the Corporation for National and Community Service (Corporation) that has been edited to accommodate the timelines specific to the State of Vermont. It outlines the purpose and source of AmeriCorps\*State and AmeriCorps\*National funding for federal fiscal year 2010, AmeriCorps national service priority areas/strategic initiatives, types of grant programs available, and Catalog of Federal Regulation citations related to AmeriCorps program management requirements.

### **NOTICE OF FEDEAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) OVERVIEW**

**Federal Agency Name:** Corporation for National and Community Service  
AmeriCorps State and National Programs  
**State Commission Name:** Vermont Commission on National and Community Service  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** AmeriCorps\*State and National Grants FY 2010  
**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement  
**CFDA No.:** 94.006  
**Key Dates:** Various  
**November 9, 2009:** Completed applications due to Vermont Commission on National and Community Service office in Waterbury

### **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS: FOR AMERICORPS STATE GRANTS IN VERMONT STATE**

Applications are to be submitted using eGrants, the Corporation's integrated, secure, web-based system for applications.

The Corporation's mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. The VT CNCS strategic initiatives align with those of the Corporation for the grant competition, and we will also give special consideration to projects that address one or a combination of five strategic initiatives that meet critical needs of our nation, achieve national service goals, and address community problems:

- 1. Education**
- 2. Clean Energy/ Environment**
- 3. Healthy Futures**
- 4. Veterans**
- 5. Opportunity**

The Corporation will make an effort to allocate not less than 10 percent of the financial assistance and approved national service positions provided through the grants to eligible entities proposing to carry out "encore service programs". The term "encore service program" means a program, carried out by an eligible entity that involves a significant number of participants age 55 or older in the program and that takes advantage of the skills and experience that such participants offer in the design and implementation of the program. In addition, the Corporation anticipates that at least 15 percent of the funds will support applicants that have not received an AmeriCorps state or



national operational grant in the last five years. Additional programs and program models that may receive special consideration in the selection process are described in the AmeriCorps regulation § 2522.450 ([http://www.americorps.gov/help/ac\\_regs/ac\\_regsRev.htm](http://www.americorps.gov/help/ac_regs/ac_regsRev.htm)) The Corporation reserves the right to re-focus program dollars in the event of disaster or other compelling need, and will make an announcement in this event.

**2010 AmeriCorps State & National Grants Estimated Funding Available Subject to Appropriations**  
Subject to the availability of appropriations for fiscal year 2010, the Corporation announces the anticipated availability of approximately \$363 million to award new, re-competing, and continuation AmeriCorps State and National grants. The grant categories are: State Commission and National Competitive including Professional Corps and Fixed-Amount Grants; State and National EAP; States and Territories without Commissions; and Indian Tribes.

Please see [http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/09\\_0918\\_nofa\\_ac.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/09_0918_nofa_ac.pdf) for full text of the Federal NOFO.

Program requirements are located in the AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520 - 2550 ([http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/45CFR\\_chapterXXV.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/45CFR_chapterXXV.pdf)). This *Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (Notice)* should be read together with the regulations and the AmeriCorps application instructions for the program to which you are applying ([http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/09\\_0918\\_nofa\\_ac\\_inst.pdf](http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/09_0918_nofa_ac_inst.pdf)).

**Table 1: Program Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations**

Requirements and Selection	Citation in the AmeriCorps Regulations
Member Service Activities	§§ 2520.20-2520.55
Prohibited Activities	§ 2520.65
Tutoring Programs	§§ 2522.900-2522.950
Matching Funds	§§ 2521.35-2521.90
Member Benefits	§§ 2522.240-2522.250
Calculating Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY)	§ 2522.485
Performance Measures	§§ 2522.500-2522.650
Evaluation	§§ 2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740
Selection Criteria and Selection Process	§§ 2522.400-2522.475

If there is any inconsistency between this VT CNCS Application Instructions/ NOFO, AmeriCorps regulations, the Federal NOFO, and the Federal Application Instructions, the order of precedence is as follows:

1. AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550 take precedence over
2. *Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity*, which takes precedence over the
3. Federal Application Instructions, which takes precedence over the
4. VT CNCS Application Instructions/ NOFO.

**Authority**

These funds will be available under authority of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §§12571-12595).

**Table 2: Term of Service and Education Award**

<b>Term of Service</b>	<b>Minimum # of Hours</b>	<b>Education Award</b>
Full Time	1700	\$5,350
One Year Half Time	900	\$2,675
Two Year Half Time	900	\$2,675
Reduced Half Time	675	\$2,038
Quarter Time	450	\$1,415
Minimum Time	300	\$1,132

**Project/Award Period**

The Corporation generally makes grant awards for three years, with funding in annual increments. Grantees will be eligible for continuation funding in the second and third year contingent on the availability of appropriations, compliance, and satisfactory performance.

**AmeriCorps members may not begin service until the Corporation issues a grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the award being issued.**

**Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)**

The Corporation determines the maximum cost per MSY on an annual basis. Applicants calculate their cost per MSY and the Corporation uses this number to compare costs of programs. The cost per MSY is determined by dividing the Corporation's share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested in the grant. One MSY is the equivalent of a full-time term of service. The cost per MSY does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn.

The maximum average cost per MSY across all sub-grants in a state is \$13,000.

**Type of Funding Instrument**

The type of funding instrument is a grant.

**Match Requirements**

Program requirements, including requirements on match, are specified in the AmeriCorps regulations, as modified by 2009 appropriations language, and summarized below.

**Fixed-Amount Grants**

There is no match requirement for fixed-amount grants.

**Reimbursable Grants (non-fixed-amount)**

A successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with the second three-year cycle, match gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR 2521.60.

**Table 3: Match Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations**

<b>Competition</b>	<b>Match Requirement</b>
State Competitive, Territories, States and Territories without Commissions, National Direct, Professional Corps, National Planning Grants, Indian Tribes	Minimum grantee share is 24%. Starting in Year 4, overall grantee share of total program costs increases gradually to 50% by the tenth year of funding and any year thereafter.
Fixed-Amount Pilot	There is no matching requirement for fixed-amount grants. Grantees pay all program costs and the Corporation provides a fixed amount, to be determined, per MSY.
State EAP and National EAP	There is no matching requirement for fixed-amount grants. Grantee pays all program costs and the Corporation provides up to \$800 per MSY.

### **Living Allowance**

**You must provide full-time members with a living allowance that is between \$11,800 (minimum) and \$23,600 (maximum) except as noted, below. You are not required to provide living allowances for members serving less than full time.**

### **Living Allowance Exceptions**

**Prior to September 21, 1993:** If your program existed prior to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (enacted September 21, 1993), the law does not require you to provide living allowances to your members. If you choose to offer the living allowance, you are exempt from the minimum requirement of \$11,800 but not from the maximum requirement of \$23,600.

### **Other Eligibility Requirements**

**Lobbying:** Any organization described in Section 501 (c) (4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply, serve as a host site for member placements, or act in any type of supervisory role in AmeriCorps programs.

**Current Grantees:** An organization that currently operates a Corporation-funded program or is applying for other Corporation funding is an eligible applicant.

### **Application and Submission Information**

#### **Using eGrants:**

- We suggest you first prepare and save your application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the document into eGrants.
- **We strongly encourage you to create your eGrants account and begin your application at least three weeks prior to the final submission deadline and begin pasting your application into eGrants no later than ten days before the deadline.** This will allow you time to address technical issues prior to the deadline. Technical issues are more likely to be considered as a factor in allowing a late submission if you begin entering your application within this time frame.
- Use only UPPERCASE letters for all section headings and other information you would like to highlight in your narrative. Bold face, bullets, underlines, or other types of formatting, charts, diagrams, and tables will not copy into eGrants.

- Adhere to all the character limits indicated in the application instructions. Characters include all the letters, punctuation, and spaces in your document.

**Technical Difficulties:** You should contact the eGrants Help Desk immediately if a problem arises while you are creating your account, preparing, or submitting your application. If you are working to resolve a technical issue and question whether your eGrants submission will be successful, please send a hard copy of your full application to the Corporation while you continue to work on entering your application in eGrants, following the instructions below.

In the event you are prevented from completing and submitting your application by the deadline because you are having technical eGrants submission issues, contact the eGrants Helpdesk at 202-606-7506 or email [egrantshelp@cns.gov](mailto:egrantshelp@cns.gov), prior to the 5:00 p.m. Eastern/Daylight Standard Time deadline to explain your technical issue and get a ticket number.

### **Funding Restrictions**

Please refer to the relevant OMB Circulars on allowable costs for further guidance. The OMB circulars are online at [www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars](http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars).

A-21 - Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, 2 CFR 220

A-87 - Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments, 2 CFR 225

A-122 - Cost Principles for Non Profit Organizations, 2 CFR 230

Programs must comply with all federal laws, regulations, and OMB circulars for grant management, allowable costs, and audits, including providing audits to the A-133 clearinghouse if they expend over \$500,000 in federal funds, as required by OMB Circular A-133.

If you have any questions, please contact Martha Faber at VT CNCS, 103 South Main Street Waterbury, VT 05671-0204, Phone: 802-241-4244, [martha.faber@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:martha.faber@ahs.state.vt.us)